757 distance and the hazardous mountain journey, nor would they go to Ch'êng-chiang for medical treatment. And so in case of illness most of them still wait for the will of Heaven, either for spontaneous recovery or for the arrival of
• 763 the death spirit. Shortly before death, the sick person is removed from the bedroom to the front hall, where he is dressed in burial clothes to await his end. After death, messages are sent around to relatives and neighbors for them to come and help in post-mortem arrangements. If the deceased person is a woman, then her family has to be notified; otherwise there could be complaints from that direction.

[787] (2) Funeral. When an old man dies, within
764 the following two or three days the head of the family would consult a wizard priest or a "Yin Yang" specialist in Ch'êng-chiang for an auspicious day for the funeral. When the date is set the villagers are notified, and every family sends a young male member to help in funeral affairs such as moving the body, carrying the coffin, and building a funeral pyre. All those villagers younger than the deceased would come to burn incense and offer sacrifices to the departed spirit and to accompany the funeral cortege, which is led by a Taoist priest and two impersonated devils, one male and one female, wearing strange clothes and masks, followed by a few minor devils, beating drums and playing music. This procession is called "dispatching the Yin (spirit) lantern". Halfway along the journey the procession would halt, the drumming and music would cease, and the impersonated devils, who have fulfilled their functions, would stop parading. At the same time the female mourners would also discard their robes of mourning and squat on the spot to rest. The rest of the party would then proceed to the cremation ground or the burial ground. If the de-